

**From:** [John Shaheen](#)  
**To:** [Senate Finance Committee](#)  
**Subject:** Support Alaska WWAMI medical education program  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 25, 2015 4:40:08 PM

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Dear Committee Finance,

WWAMI is a collaborative medical school among universities in five NW states. Operating for over 44 years, the program has consistently provided some of the best and brightest Alaskans access to the medical education and training necessary for them to return home and serve their communities, helping to address our state's shortage of physicians. The intent language included in the House budget will eliminate the program.

The elimination of this program will have long term impacts for Alaska's health care system. Without the program, physician shortages will worsen and recruitment challenges will increase. The result will be an increase in health care costs and a decrease in health care quality as we are no longer able to "grow our own" physicians. The WWAMI program is a success and a critical part of the state education and health care infrastructure.

To protect the health of all Alaskans, remove the intent language to eliminate the program from the budget. This program represents one of the most efficient and cost-effective tools Alaska has available to invest in our health delivery system and the health of our people.

Providence Kodiak Island Medical Center and Kodiak Community Health Center are both active participants in medical school training opportunities. Through these opportunities, several physicians and advanced practitioners have returned to Kodiak to establish practices in a diverse, remote, and isolated community. PKIMC is expanding its Specialty Clinic, a place designed to bridge the gap to exceptional health care for thousands of Alaskans unable to travel to Anchorage for specialty care. WWAMI is crucial to continue to provide adequate, necessary and readily available health care to one of the busiest commercial fishing ports in the entire United States.

Please ensure funding for the WWAMI program continues.

Respectfully submitted,

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Sincerely,

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